Anti-racism Audit Checklist For Congregations

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Buy-in

- ❑ Elder board, church council, or governing body buy-in established through funding approval.
- ❑ Official statement of support for audit issued from governing body.

Funding

- ❑ Budget is set for the audit.
- ❑ Budget includes stipends and honoraria for representatives from the BIPOC[1] community.
- ❑ Budget includes appropriate funding for professional anti-racism participation and support, if possible.

Audit team

- ❑ Racially diverse team formed, majority BIPOC members, if possible.
- ❑ Mix of internal and external participants established.
- ❑ Pastoral and elder participation designated.
- ❑ Team is no larger than 5-7 members.

Timeline

- ❑ Set a goal for completion within a two-month (8-week) time frame from start to finish.
- ❑ Establish three phrases – design, data collection, summary and report – within the 8-week period. Aim for 2.5 weeks per phase.
- ❑ Create specific deadlines for each phase.

[1] BIPOC is an acronym which stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. This is person-first language, which shifts away from terms like “marginalized” and “minority.” The phrase “People of Color” is a broad term, which includes those who are Black or African American, East Asian, Hispanic, Latinx/Latine, South Asian, and Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.

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Respondents

- ❑ One-third each of pastoral staff, elders, and congregants are identified.
- ❑ Majority BIPOC participants identified with stipends included (if possible).
- ❑ Policies are put in place to go to spaces where respondents are rather than asking them to come to the church building.

Interview questions

- ❑ Simple three-question model (adapt and develop as needed):
  - How is our congregation acting or participating in racism?
  - How is our congregation supporting efforts to dismantle racism?
  - What could our congregation better support efforts to dismantle racism?

Internal assessment

- ❑ Team has reviewed the areas and answered queries about each area located on pages 3 & 4 of this document.

Governing body

- ❑ Report is made to the governing body.
- ❑ Actions steps identified.

Results

- ❑ Results of the anti-racism audit released to staff and congregants. They are given time to review the results, ask questions, receive answers, and consider next steps.
- ❑ Feedback from staff and congregants is considered when creating action steps. Action steps include clear dates and information on accountability.
- ❑ Results are released to partners and the public along with information on next steps.

Follow-up

- ❑ Timelines set for each action step. Some steps may start right away, while others may start later in order to build upon earlier steps/successes.
- ❑ Track the action steps, noting successes and concerns. Comment where timeline changes are needed and why.
- ❑ Establish check-in times with leadership, staff, congregants, partners, and the community. Use those times to demonstrate your accountability to becoming more anti-racist.

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Internal Assessment Areas and Queries

Mission, identity, and purpose

- Is racism or anti-racism integrated into the identity documents of the congregation?
- Do those documents pass the "R-One" test (i.e., do the diversity and/or identity documents of the congregation mention racism within the first page?)
- Has research been conducted into the racial history of your congregation? If yes, how broadly has it been publicized?

Structure

- What is the racial composition of the board or oversight body of the congregation?
- Does that oversight body hold a common analysis of racism and anti-racism?
- Has that oversight body gone through anti-racism training?
- Does that oversight body have an actionable plan for initiating and carrying through a 1, 5, and 10-year plan for dismantling racism in your congregation? If so, how effectively has it been implemented?
- Has the congregation's oversight body put into place a plan for developing accountability to Communities of Color?
- Are the church's structures prepared to resist Oppressive Power (OP), Identity Power (IDP), and White Power (WP)?

Constituency

- Does the congregation have a racially specific understanding of the racial demographics of the congregation's constituency?
- Are there efforts in place to support effective outreach to all members of the congregation?
- If the constituency is all-White, are there measures in place to support racial diversity efforts in the local community?

Procedure

- Are there procedures in place that hold pastoral staff accountable for embodying anti-racism behaviors in the congregation?
- Are there procedures in place for responding to and challenging expressions of racism as they appear at the congregation at all levels of the racism iceberg, not just Oppressive Power?[2]
- Are there procedures in place to prioritize BIPOC vendors?

[2] The Racism Iceberg can be found in the document, "A Road Map for Dismantling Institutional Racism in Nonprofits and Other Public Facing Institutions."

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Policy

- Has the congregation put in place policies for regular reviews of action toward anti-racism plans?
- Has the congregation established policies to develop criteria for assessing the results of actions, not just the intentions?
- Has the congregation taken proactive steps to ensure that all spaces are fully welcoming to all?

Practice [3]

- What are the stated practices around key cultural elements and how do they support White norms and standards? For example, how does your congregation establish norms around time, conflict, dress, leadership style, and worship style?
- What steps has your congregation taken to improve and diversify your outreach and ministries? Has the local community been asked to identify what it wants/needs?

Program

- How do the congregation's programs support the local White community to join the church in the work of dismantling racism?
- How do the church's programs support the local BIPOC community to empower and support their efforts to dismantle racism?
- Have your congregation's anti-racism commitments been made apparent, transparent, and consistent?
- Does your congregation have relationships with local groups who are actively working to challenge racism?
- Has the pastoral leadership of your congregation gone to the cultural, political, and meeting spaces of the local BIPOC community to listen and learn? Have funds been set aside funds to compensate BIPOC leaders for their consultation and advice?

Personnel

- Has your congregation developed deliberate recruitment strategies to diversify your church's staff?
- Has your congregation fostered and built up local members of the BIPOC community to become potential staff members?

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[3] For more information on this area, read "White Supremacy Culture" by Tema Okun, which is based on the work of Daniel Buford from People's Institute for Survival and Beyond for more specifics. In brief, the characteristics covered include perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, only one right way, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, progress is bigger, objectivity, and the right to comfort.

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